

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Karen Thomas, Case Manager
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: February 4, 2014

SUBJECT: **BZA Case 18671**, Takoma Park – Modification Request (BZA 17679)
6923-6953 Maple Street, NW and 6916-6926 Willow Street, NW
Square 3357, Lots 26-29, 40, 808, 811, 814, 815, 818-820, 824, 825, 840, and 843

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

OP recommends *approval of the requested modification, including:*

- Variance relief – Parking requirements § 2101: (103 spaces required: 95 spaces provided); and
- Variance relief–Loading requirements § 2200: (2, 55-foot berths required; 2, 30-foot berths provided)

The Office of Planning (OP) continues to recommend approval of the previously approved development under BZA Order 17679 for:

- Special Exception relief for new residential development in the R-5-A District - § 353;
- Special Exception relief for Theoretical Building sites - § 2516; and
- Special exception relief from the roof structure requirements under § 411.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	6923-6953 Maple Street, NW and 6916-6926 Willow Street, NW
Legal Description	The subject property, approximately 101,879 square feet in size, is within Square 3357 consisting of vacant Lots 26, 27, 28, 29, 40, 814, 815, 819, 820, 824, 825, 840 and 843; and single-family lots 808, 811 and 818
Ward/ANC	4/ANC 4B
Lot Characteristics	Gently sloping vacant parcel consisting of 14 vacant lots and 2 lots developed with single-family homes.
Zoning	The site is currently zoned R-5-A, which is designed to permit flexibility of design and all types of urban residential development with low height and density.
Existing Development	The site is currently improved with a surface parking lot on Lots 815, 820 and 843 and two contributing historic houses on Lots 808, 811 and 818. The property is generally bounded by Carroll Street, Eastern Avenue, Willow Street, Sandy Spring Road, and Maple Street and is near the eastern District of Columbia/Maryland boundary line.

Historic District	Takoma Park Historic District
Adjacent Properties and Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The property is surrounded primarily by commercially zoned property dedicated to commercial uses. To the north of the site is a CVS Pharmacy in the C-2-A district. To the south and southwest are single family houses in the R-5-A district. To the east in the C-2-A District is a large commercial building. To the northwest are a number of commercial uses in the C-2-A district. The site is within the Takoma Park Historic District, and the Takoma Park Central District Plan boundaries.

III. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Prior Board approval under BZA application 17679 in 2008, included special exception relief from § 353 and 2516 for new residential development in the R-5-A district pursuant to § 2516 for 79 units, including 38 apartment units in each building and the relocation of three residential single-family homes per the approval of the Historic Preservation Board (HPA #06-448, 06-449 and 06-450). Relief was also granted from the roof structure requirements.

However, the development proposal has changed, including:

- the HP approved demolition of one of three single family homes;
- an increase in the number of units from 38 to 50 units in each building, thus triggering the need for variance relief from the loading requirements under § 2200; and
- variance relief from the parking requirements to permit 95 spaces where 103 would be required.

A new application, BZA 18671 was filed on September 20, 2013 but was subsequently amended on December 4, 2013 requesting the Board consider the identified changes as a modification of the original approval under BZA 17679, with relief required from the loading and parking requirements, rather than as a new application.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The current proposed plan now shows two, matching three-story brick apartment buildings, each with approximately 50 apartments, primarily studios and one-bedroom units. The buildings identified as Maple House and Willow House would be oriented towards their abutting street, Maple Street and Willow Street. Both buildings would access 92 surface parking spaces from 25-foot drive aisles provided at the northern end of the site. The parking area would be located between the buildings but would also run along the northern property line. Bicycle storage is shown located in the basement. The units on the second and third floors would have individual porches and each building will provide rooftop recreation space. While the majority of the site would be taken up by the buildings and surface parking, a landscaped public walkway would run along the southern end of the buildings connecting the two streets. Nine willow oaks would be distributed in the parking area to shade the parking surface. The south portion of the lot is shown shielded by evergreens to protect views into the single family homes. The project includes a combined total of 25,611 square feet of green space around the multi-family buildings and 3,328 square feet of permeable paving.

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and REQUESTED RELIEF

R-5-A Zone	Regulation	Proposal – Apartment houses		Relief
		Maple House Lot A	Willow House Lot B	
Number of Units	No limit	50	50	None Required
Height § 400	40 ft./3 stories	40 ft./3 stories	40 ft./3 stories	None Required
Lot Width § 401	40 ft. min.	314.3ft.	351.5 ft.	None Required
Lot Area § 401	4,000 sq. ft. min.	44,160 sq. ft.	44,174 sq. ft.	None Required
FAR § 402	0.9 (1.8 w/IZ)	0.9 (1.08w/IZ)	0.9 (1.08 w/IZ)	None Required
Lot Occupancy § 403	40 % max.	35.9%	35.8%	None Required
Side Yard § 405	10 ft. min.	25 ft./70.75ft.	26.75 ft./109.8 ft.	None Required
Rear Yard § 404	20 ft. min.	39 ft. 3 ins	36 ft. 4ins	None Required
Parking § 2101	1/dwelling unit	46 spaces	46 spaces	Relief Required
Loading § 2200	1-55 ft. berth 1- Service /delivery	1-30 ft. berth	1-30 ft. berth	Relief Required
Roof structures § 411	One enclosure 1:1 setback Walls of equal height	Multiple - Setback - Walls of -	-Enclosures -Not one to one - unequal height.	Relief previously approved (#17679)

Table 1

R-5-A	Regulation	Proposal – Single family			Relief
		6926 Willow Lot C	6949 Maple Lot D	6924 Willow Lot E	
Height § 400	40 ft./3 stories	25'	22'	20'	NR
Lot Area § 401	4,000 sf min.	4,715 sf	4,715 sf	4,920 sf	NR
Lot Width § 401	40 ft.	56 ' 5"	60'	55' 2"	NR
FAR § 402	0.9	0.34	0.15	0.23	NR
Lot Occupancy § 403	40% max.	24.5%	15.1%	23.5%	NR
Side Yard § 405	8 ft. min	10.5'/14'	8 '13'.	8'/17.5'	NR
Rear Yard § 404	20 ft.	33' 11".	26'	26'	NR
Parking §2101	1 / dwelling unit	1 space	1 space	1 space	NR

Table 2

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

a) Variance Relief from §§ 2101 and 2200

The Zoning Regulations require loading facilities for residential buildings with 50 or more units. As proposed, each loading dock area would measure 12 ft. x 30 ft. where a 12 ft. x 55-ft. loading berth would be required. Parking is also required in a one to one ratio under the current regulations.

- Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The project involves the relocation of contributing historic structures on the site, as well as the provision of surface parking for the residential units. In combination, this exceptional situation reduces the available area for the provision of two 55-foot loading berths, as well as the required 100 parking spaces for the multi-family buildings.

- No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

The reduced size of the loading and areas would not be a detriment to the public good, as a larger area would further reduce the number of on-site parking spaces, which would not be preferred by the community. In addition, current trends indicate that smaller unit sizes minimize the need for larger loading areas. The 8 spaces that would not be provided on-site are minimal and would not adversely impact the on-street parking supply in the neighborhood. The site is well within walking distance to the Takoma Metro Station. The applicant has state that if a 55ft truck is expected, typically a permit is sought from DDOT for temporary on-street loading.

- No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The reduced loading area is a compromise which would permit both requirements to be met on-site, in harmony with the purpose and intent of the regulations. No substantial harm to the regulations would be realized as up to 92% of spaces would be provided on-site and the project is located in a transit accessible neighborhood, including within walking distance of a metro-rail station with access to several Metrobus routes.

b) SPECIAL EXCEPTION RELIEF- § 353 New Residential Development (R-5-A)

Section 353 requires the Office of Planning's comments on **"the site plan, arrangement of buildings and structures, and the provisions of light, air, parking, recreation, landscaping, and grading as they relate to the future residents of the project and the surrounding neighborhood."**

Arrangement of the building, provision of light and air

As shown on Tables 1 and 2 the building meets all the setback requirements. The apartment buildings would be separated by a distance of approximately 75.5 feet at the rear, with side yards which would exceed the minimum requirements. Several windows for each unit and porches would facilitate adequate light and air into each unit. The single family houses that are currently located on the northeastern portion on the property and closer to a commercial use would be relocated to the southern portions of the site and adjacent to the single family homes within the square. The three-story apartment buildings would create a transition and buffer between the single-family residences and commercial uses abutting the northern portion of the site. Adequate open space is provided around the buildings, and their fronts are set back

Parking

The application satisfies the zoning requirement of one space per unit for each single-family detached home. Relief has been requested from the one to one parking requirement for the multifamily buildings. Parking would be provided as surface parking on Lots A and B and a larger portion of the parking area would be located between the buildings. Some spaces would also be provided along the north property line as shown on the Site Plan (A101a). All standard, compact, and handicapped spaces would satisfy the required

measurements for each type. The plans allocate up to 450 square feet to bicycle parking in the cellar (Sheet A102).

Recreation

Recreational space would be provided on the roof of the multi-family buildings. In addition, several small parks are within a few blocks from the subject property.

Landscaping

The Landscape Plan, Sheet L200, shows a mixture of trees, shrubs, groundcover and grasses around the building. Plans indicate that a number of trees would be planted along both Maple and Willow Streets. Landscaping would also be used to separate the multifamily buildings from the single family units which would front on Maple and Willow Street. The applicant would construct sidewalks along Willow and Maple Streets of brick and concrete pavers. Through the use of new evergreen trees the rear yards of the single family houses would be screened from the multifamily units. Landscaping and retaining walls would also be used to conceal the loading areas from view along Willow and Maple Streets.

Grading

The site slopes gently from north to south (Sheet C600) and the existing topography, to a large extent, would be retained. To accommodate the change in topography the applicant would utilize 42 inch-high garden walls and 1-3, foot-high retaining walls. Runoff from the site would be regulated through an underground stormwater detention facility system located below the parking area between the multifamily buildings. The applicant has provided information regarding Drainage Calculations (Sheet C200), a site development plan indicating a stormwater management structure (Sheet C300), a Pre Development Drainage Area Map (Sheet C400) and a Post-Development Drainage Area Map (Sheet C500). The drainage calculations provided (C200) indicate that the total storage volume that would be provided for the site, exceeds the total storage volume required. Based on the data provided, significant runoff from the site post-development is not anticipated.

c) Special Exception Relief pursuant to Section 411.11

The previous Board approval for this project, BZA 17697 (pg. 8), determined that:

- The need to have separate stairwells that leads to the bottom of the building when recreational space is located on the roof arises from the Building Code requirements. Thus each structure would have its own enclosure. This would result in reduced massing on the roof and minimized visibility of the structures;
- The inability to meet the 1:1 setback from the roof's edge results from the Building Code's recommendation that the stairwells be placed at the extreme ends of the corridor; and
- The walls of unequal height would create a "more sound and pleasing design," as this would minimize massing on the roof and be in harmony with the intent and purposes of the regulations.

The current roof plans are identical in area, measurements and locations to the previously approved plans. The requested relief is also identical to the previous approval and the reasons for the exceptional situation are consistent with the Board's prior approval.

2516 EXCEPTIONS TO BUILDING LOT CONTROL (Residence Districts)

2516.1 If approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment as a special exception under § 3104, two (2) or more principal buildings or structures may be erected on a single subdivided lot, subject to the provisions of this section."

The proposal is to subdivide the existing property into 4 lots, each with a principal building.

2516.2 This section applies to construction on a lot that is located in, or within twenty-five feet (25 ft.) of a Residence District.

The subject property is within the R-5-A district.

2516.3 In addition to other filing requirements, the applicant shall submit to the Board, with the new application, four (4) site plans for all new rights-of-way and easements, and existing and preliminary landscaping and grading plans with approximate building footprints; provided:

- (a) The applicant shall also submit, either with the original application or at a later time, final landscaping and grading plans and two (2) sets of typical floor plan and elevations; and**
- (b) If the applicant elects to submit the plans referenced in § 2516.3(a) at a later date, the Board's original approval shall be conditional, subject to a later public hearing and final decision on the project as a whole.**

The proposed development would not create any new public right-of-ways. Each building would front on one of the existing right-of-ways of Maple Street or Willow Street. The applicant provided an existing site conditions plan, a site plan of the overall site development, including the multifamily and two single-family buildings; grading plan; stormwater management plan; elevations; and floor plans for each of the multifamily buildings.

2516.4 The number of principal buildings permitted by this section shall not be limited; provided, that the applicant for a permit to build submits satisfactory evidence that all the requirements of this chapter (such as use, height, bulk, open spaces around each building, and limitations on structures on alley lots pursuant to § 2507), and §§ 3202.2 and 3202.3 are met.

The proposed development would have 5 principal buildings. The applicant's Site Plan and Tables 1 and 2 in this report show how each lot would meet the required site area and widths, as well as a building envelope within the required setbacks.

2516.5 If a principal building has no street frontage, as determined by dividing the subdivided lot into theoretical building sites for each principal building, the following provisions shall apply:

The property would be re-subdivided into theoretical lots each having a principal building that has frontage on, and direct access from at least one public street. However, in the multifamily buildings, not all units would front on a public right-of-way.

2516.6 In providing for net density pursuant to § 2516.11, the Board shall require at least the following:

- (a) The area of land that forms a covenanted means of ingress or egress shall not be included in the area of any theoretical lot, or in any yard that is required by this title;**

No new right-of-way would be created as part of the development.

- (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this title, each means of vehicular ingress or egress to any principal building shall be twenty-five feet (25 ft.) in width, but need not be paved for its entire width;**

The entrance driveways would have a width of 25 feet into the parking lot of the multifamily buildings.

- (c) If there are not at least two (2) entrances or exits from the means of ingress or egress, a turning area shall be provided with a diameter of not less than sixty feet (60 ft.); and**

Egress and ingress to each of the buildings would be provided from either Maple or Willow Streets.

- (d) The requirements of paragraphs (b) and (c) of this subsection may be modified if the Board finds that a lesser width or diameter will be compatible with, and will not be likely to have an adverse effect on, the present character and future development of the neighborhood; provided, that the Board shall give specific consideration to the spacing of buildings and the availability of resident, guest, and service parking.*

This is not applicable to the amended plans.

2516 *Where not in conflict with the Act to Regulate the Height of Buildings in the District of Columbia, approved June 1, 1910 (36 Stat. 452, as amended; D.C. Official Code §§ 6-601.01 to 6-601.09 (2001) (formerly codified at D.C. Code §§ 5-401 to 5-409 (1994 Repl. & 1999 Supp.))), the height of a building governed by the provisions of this section, in all zone districts, shall be measured from the finished grade at the middle of the front of the building.*

The height limit in this zone district is 40-feet. As shown on Tables 1 and 2, the multifamily buildings would have a height of 40 feet measured from the front of the buildings along Willow and Maple Streets. Both single-family houses are below 40 feet in height.

2517 *The proposed development shall comply with the substantive provisions of this title and shall not likely have an adverse effect on the present character and future development of the neighborhood*

Each building meets the setback, yards and area requirements. The design and layout of the development would be sensitive to the natural topography of the property. The subject property has pedestrian connection north to south connecting Maple to Willow Street and each building is oriented to face outwards to the streets in order to integrate the new development into the existing community. The architecture of the buildings would complement the historic character of the other single-family houses the area. The proposal is fully conforming to the Takoma Plan which was developed with extensive community input.

The development of this site would have a positive impact on the surrounding community since it replaces undeveloped properties with residential use and preserves two single-family houses which are contributing structures to the historic district. Pedestrian walkways are provided to encourage walking throughout the community. The residences would support existing and proposed retail establishments in the area and its location would facilitate residents' use of Metrorail and the nearby Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT). The applicant proposes landscaping on the site to help retain the wooded character of the area. The development density, housing type, and historic character remain consistent with the recommendations of the Historic Preservation Board's prior approval.

2516.9 *Before taking final action on an application under this section, the Board shall refer the application to the D.C. Office of Planning for coordination, review, and report, including:*

- (a) The relationship of the proposed development to the overall purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations, and other planning considerations for the area and the District of Columbia as a whole, including the plans, programs, and policies of other departments and agencies of the District government; provided, that the planning considerations that are addressed shall include, but not be limited to:*

(1) Public safety relating to police and fire concerns;

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS) stated to OP that they do not anticipate that the development would generate a significant increase in the demand on their services, consistent with their prior determination under BZA 19679.

(2) The environment, relating to water supply, water pollution, soil erosion, and solid waste management;

Both water and sewer lines are provided along Maple Street and have the capacity to accommodate the increase in demand that would be generated by the development. The applicant did not submit a detailed soil erosion plan for review. The Drainage Plan, SheetC100, shows yard drains and gutters routed into an underground water quality and detention system under the parking lot to manage the quality and quantity of stormwater flows.

(3) Public education

There are public and charter schools in Takoma Park which serve students from the community.

(4) Recreation

A roof terrace on each building that would be available to all residents is included in the plans. All units on the second and third floors of the multifamily buildings would have private porches. Additionally, several small community parks would serve future residents.

(5) Parking, loading, and traffic

The applicant has requested relief from the required one parking space for each unit. Up to 92% of the parking and reduced-sized loading areas for the multifamily development would be provided on-site in close proximity to each building. Most of the parking spaces would be located between the multifamily buildings and the views would be shielded from the streets. Each of the single family houses has a driveway that would accommodate off-street parking. Since the parking and loading provisions have been modified from the development's prior approval, DDOT would provide their review under separate cover.

(6) Urban design

The proposed development is within the Takoma Park Historic District. The existing single-family houses on the site are considered to be contributing buildings to the historic district. Their relocation, preservation, and restoration would help to reinforce the historic character of this area and would allow the multifamily buildings to be a transition between the single family residences to the south and the commercial use to the north.

The buildings, "Maple House" and "Willow House," would be oriented to the streets with a portion of the surface parking area at the rear, between both buildings. Their mass would be modulated with minor insets at the ends, projecting porches and at the center by an entrance to each building. The buildings' traditional design would be generally styled along the lines of eclectic apartment buildings from the 1910s and 1920s, with a rusticated base, overhanging bracketed eaves supporting pent roofs, two-over-one windows and classically-inspired open porches. A landscaped public walkway would run along the southern side of the buildings connecting the two streets. The design and layout of the development would remain sensitive to the natural topography of the property as grading would be minimal. No changes have been made to the exterior design with this requested modification.

(7) As appropriate, historic preservation and visual impacts on adjacent parkland;

The subject property is within the Takoma Park Historic District and the proposed development has been reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board and granted preliminary approval. The development will preserve the two existing single-family homes on the property, which are contributing structures to the historic district. The design of the new buildings would be reflective of and compatible to the historic district. There are no parklands adjacent to the property.

- (b) Considerations of site planning; the size, location, and bearing capacity of driveways, deliveries to be made to the site; side and rear yards; density and open space; and the location, design, and screening of structures;**

The proposed development would be consistent with residences and requirements of the R-5-A zone and each lot meets all the area requirements. Due to the topography of the site, open areas are limited to access but would be landscaped. The buildings on the site would be located so as to be compatible with the surrounding uses, and as discussed above would be compatible with the historic district. Minimal changes have been made to the yards' measurements and they continue to satisfy the regulations.

(c) Considerations of traffic to be generated and parking spaces to be provided, and their impacts;

Up to 92% of the parking spaces would be provided on site and most are screened from view from the adjacent streets. While the parking ratio of one space to one unit is considerably higher than typical and thus would likely lead to more traffic, this is consistent with the current regulations and it is not envisioned that the traffic generated by the project will significantly impact on traffic movements or volumes in the area. The property is located south of the Takoma Park metro station and residents will be encouraged through TDM measures to reduce vehicular traffic through the neighborhood. The applicant would provide a secure bicycle storage area in the cellar of the buildings to encourage bicycle use. DDOT would provide their recommendations under separate cover. It is noted that in its prior decision, the Board concluded that the traffic and parking needs generated by the project would not result in an adverse impact on the neighborhood (BZA 17679, pg. 9).

(d) The impact of the proposed development on neighboring properties; and

Development of the site would bring an underdeveloped property into productive use. The design, architecture, and site planning are complementary to the surrounding community and would contribute to the vibrancy of the historic neighborhood. The site planning provides open space, on-site parking to serve residents and visitors, tree plantings, pedestrian access, stormwater runoff, and maintains slope stability. The proposed development would be of special value to the community, through the provision of new housing opportunities within transit accessible neighborhood.

(e) The findings, considerations, and recommendations of other District government agencies.

The recommendation of DDOT would be submitted under separate cover. The Department of the Environment would provide a more detailed review related to the proposed grading and stormwater management at the building permit stage. Since this project was approved prior to the Green Area Ratio requirement, the GAR score is not required. However, OP requested the score from the applicant.

2516.10 The Board may impose conditions with respect to the size and location of driveways; net density; height, design, screening, and location of structures; and any other matter that the Board determines to be required to protect the overall purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations.

OP does not recommend any additional conditions.

VI. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The subject property is within the Takoma Park Historic District. The development of the site has been reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) since 2006. Since the Board's concept approval is only valid for two years, the plans are scheduled for Board review in November 2013. OP's Historic Preservation staff commented that the submitted plans for the two buildings are essentially the same and that one of the three single-family homes was permitted to be demolished. Thus, two homes would be relocated to the west side of the lot and one would be rebuilt in its entirety.

- September 28, 2006 HPRB granted conceptual approval for the relocation and rehabilitation of the of the 3 single family units.

- November 16, 2006 HPRB granted conceptual approval for a revised proposal to relocate the 3 single family units.
- February 22, 2007 HPRB granted conceptual approval of the multifamily buildings, including its height, massing and general architectural treatment as consistent with the preservation act.

The revised plans would be submitted to an upcoming HPRB hearing in December. Historic Preservation staff stated that they had no concerns or objections with the modifications as the plans retained the elements that were previously granted concept approval.

VII. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) expressed no concerns to OP.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

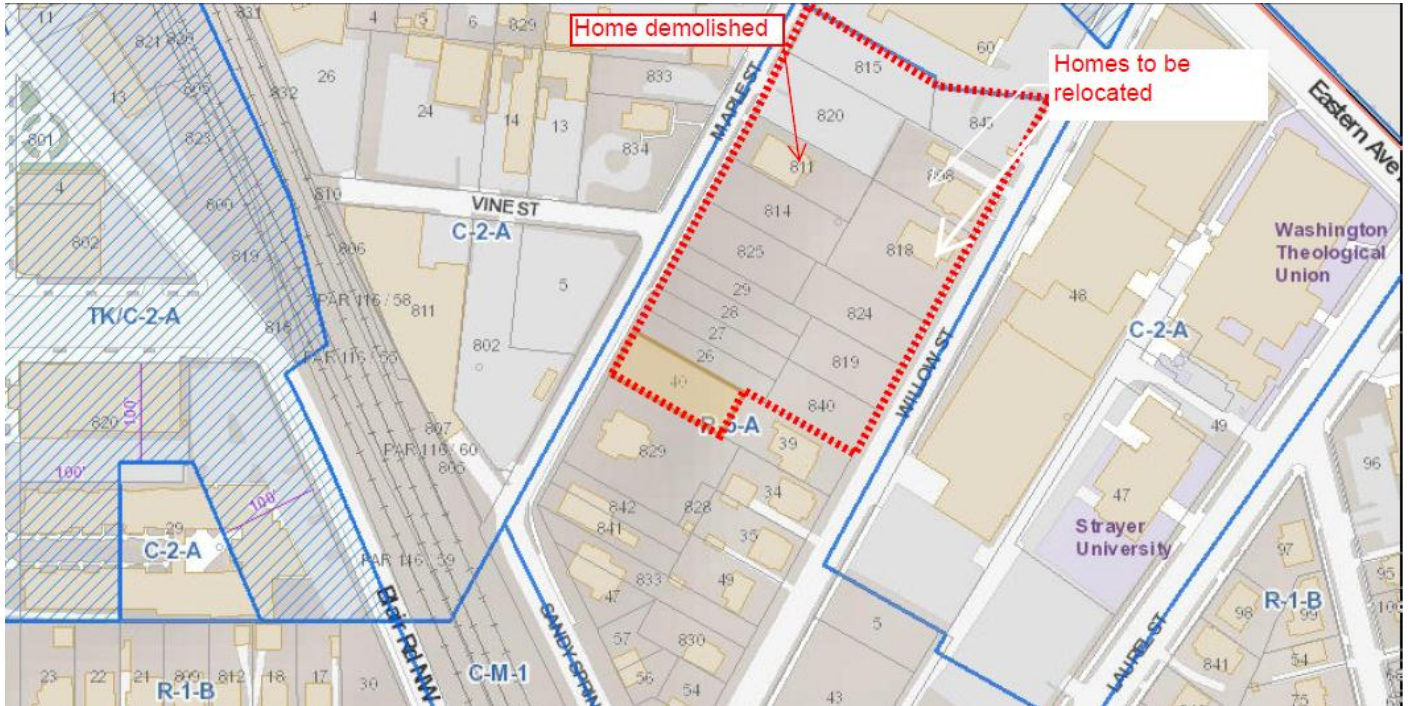
The applicant met with ANC 4B on January 27, 2014. The ANC's report would be issued under separate cover.

IX. CONCLUSION

OP continues to recommend approval of the proposed development of the subject parcel, including the requested modifications to permit parking and loading relief for the project, as it remains consistent with the type of development, density, massing permitted in an R-5-A District, as agreed to by the Board in its approval under BZA 17679.

Attachment: Location Map

ATTACHMENT



ZONING and LOCATION MAP